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Greetings to the Co- Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee.

I would like to encourage you to support SB224:

AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCHOOL NURSE ADVISORY COUNCIL

I would like to request that the student to nurse ratio recommended by the School Nurse Advisory Council be implemented in the public schools in Connecticut.

No longer is the nurse just a band aid factory, but the person in charge to access very serious health needs, such as asthma and diabetes. Along with the responsibility of responding to these health needs, many students seek out the nurse as a counselor and family support system.

Also, there are state mandated screenings and meetings with parents and staff in the interest of the student.

With many school settings having over 700 students, I must say that the average nurse sees about 40 to 60 students during a 7 hour shift. I might add, that as a former Emergency Department nurse, a busy shift was 100 patients in a 24 hour period, and that is with help of doctors , secretaries and other ancillary staff.

At the school level, working alone, the nurse is not only the health care provider, but the secretary, screener, counselor and sometimes stand in parent to the many children in the building. Truly, when the student population of a school rises, the visits increase and make an already demanding job not only more difficult, but sometimes impossible.

Therefore, I am in favor of pupil to nurse ratios. Most literature cites 1:700, I think 1:600 would be better. Also, the second person can be a medical assistant to save on cost. However, in this era of medical inclusion, kids in crisis and the mandated screenings and such, with a qualified professional nurse in any health care setting the safer the environment for everyone.

Thank you for your time,
JoAnn Caruso, RN